

News Release

Kisatchie National Forest Supervisor, Michael Balboni to Receive Statewide Award for Conservation



**USDA Forest Service
Kisatchie National Forest**

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Pineville, La. (February 19, 2013) Michael Balboni, Forest Supervisor of Kisatchie National Forest will receive the prestigious Professional Conservationist Award from the Louisiana Wildlife Federation (LWF) on Saturday, February 23rd at the annual LWF convention in Baton Rouge. Balboni is a native of Florida and has been with the US Forest Service for 35 years.

Over Balboni's tenure, he has worked at five different National Forests across the United States. For the past four years he has been Forest Supervisor at Kisatchie National Forest. In this time he has accomplished a multitude of conservation projects including: a partnership with the Rapides Parish School Board to create a "green" school, Caroline Dormon Junior High in Woodworth; the restoration and clearing of Saline Bayou a Wild and Scenic River which had been blocked by hurricane debris; the restoration and designation of natural prairies on the Winn Ranger District as state registered natural areas; a partnership with the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries for the very first "Bird Dog Training Area" on national forest land; strong support of the management of the red-cockaded woodpecker, an endangered species found on the KNF and extra protection for the threatened Louisiana pearl shell mussel.

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“Mike Balboni is truly an outstanding Louisiana conservationist who is a shining example of what hard work and perseverance can accomplish in the conservation world,” said Jim Caldwell, Staff Officer for Public Affairs, Recreation and Heritage at Kisatchie. “His unwavering commitment to his leadership role has made the Kisatchie National Forest stand out as a true leader in the conservation effort to educate our youth, to protect and manage our plant and animals, to provide good hunting and fishing to our Louisiana residents and to keep our forests and streams clean, healthy and productive.”

The Professional Conservationist Award is one of the most coveted awards given by the Louisiana Wildlife Federation (LWF). The LWF is a state-wide conservation education and advocacy organization with more than 10,000 members and 27 affiliate groups. Established in 1940, it is affiliated with the National Wildlife Federation and represents a broad constituency of conservationists including hunters, fishers, campers, birders, boaters, and other outdoor enthusiasts.

“I am truly honored to be chosen for this award, the conservation work that we are able to accomplish on the Kisatchie is a testament to the hard-working, dedicated professionals who work tirelessly to manage the national forest land in Louisiana,” said Mike Balboni.

Kisatchie National Forest (KNF) is comprised of over 600,000 acres in seven central and north Louisiana parishes. As Louisiana’s only national forest the KNF is home to a multitude of recreational opportunities including hunting, fishing, camping, hiking, boating, ATV and horse riding, canoeing/kayaking, mountain biking, picnicking and so much more. For more information about the KNF call the Forest Supervisor’s office in Pineville at (318) 473-7160 or visit www.fs.usda.gov/kisatchie

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